



TECHNICAL REPORT

Facebook Recruitment of Mexican & Mexican American Adults
with Low Educational Attainment for International Survey Research:
A Feasibility Study

AUGUST 31, 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to test the feasibility of using Facebook ads for recruiting Spanish-speaking adults with lower educational attainment who are either: 1. of Mexican heritage living in the United States; or 2. Mexicans living in Mexico. This study used a cross-sectional design to evaluate recruitment by country and city (3 most populous in Mexico; 3 largest Mexican American populations in the US). Using Facebook ads in each city, we tracked the number of eligible people who completed a screening survey (SS), the number of invited, eligible people who subsequently completed a 25-35 minute online survey (International Food Policy Study or IFPS survey), the time to reach the target sample size of 20 per city, and the costs per completed interview (recruitment and compensation).

SAMPLE & RECRUITMENT

Recruitment activities and surveys took place between April 16th and May 16th 2020 (see Figures 1 and 2). A total of 122 people (n=53 for the United States; n=69 for Mexico) completed the IFPS questionnaire. Participants were recruited through the Facebook social media platform, programming the ad to target the audience differently in each country. In the US, the ad was programmed to target Spanish speakers, Hispanic preferences and with high school as the highest level of education living in Los Angeles, San Antonio and Chicago. In México, the ad was programmed to target people with high school as the highest education level living in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. The average cost per day of advertisement in both countries was \$35.00. Spanish-language ads (Appendix 1) were designed to reach the target the population in specific cities within each country. In the United States, the ad was shown for 6 days in Los Angeles, San Antonio and Chicago, the cities with large Mexican American populations in key regions of the US¹. In Mexico, the ad was promoted 4 days in Mexico City and 5 days in Guadalajara and Monterrey – these are three of the largest cities in Mexico. People who saw the ads were invited to click on an embedded hyperlink, which took them to the SS. The SS served as the first step to determine whether or not respondents were eligible.

Respondents were eligible to participate if they were 18 years of age or older, identified themselves as Mexican or of Mexican heritage, had no more than technical or vocational training - education level, spoke Spanish, and resided in the target countries. In total, 130 participants in the United States and 256 participants in Mexico completed the SS. Email invitations with unique access links to the IFPS questionnaire were sent to eligible participants, with up to 5 email reminders with the IFPS link sent to nonresponsive eligible respondents, as needed (Figures 1 and 2). Thus, in total, respondents were exposed to the IFPS questionnaire link up to 6 times.

Respondents who clicked on the questionnaire link were shown more detailed information about the study and asked to provide consent before starting the questionnaire. Participants who completed the IFPS questionnaire received a e-gift card as a post-incentive. In the United States, participants received a \$20 USD e-gift card of their choice (Amazon or Walmart). Due to the difficulty of providing retailer e-gift cards in Mexico, participants who completed the questionnaire received \$200 Mexican pesos (\approx \$10 USD) as a direct credit on their phones.

Figure 1. Flow chart of recruitment in the United States

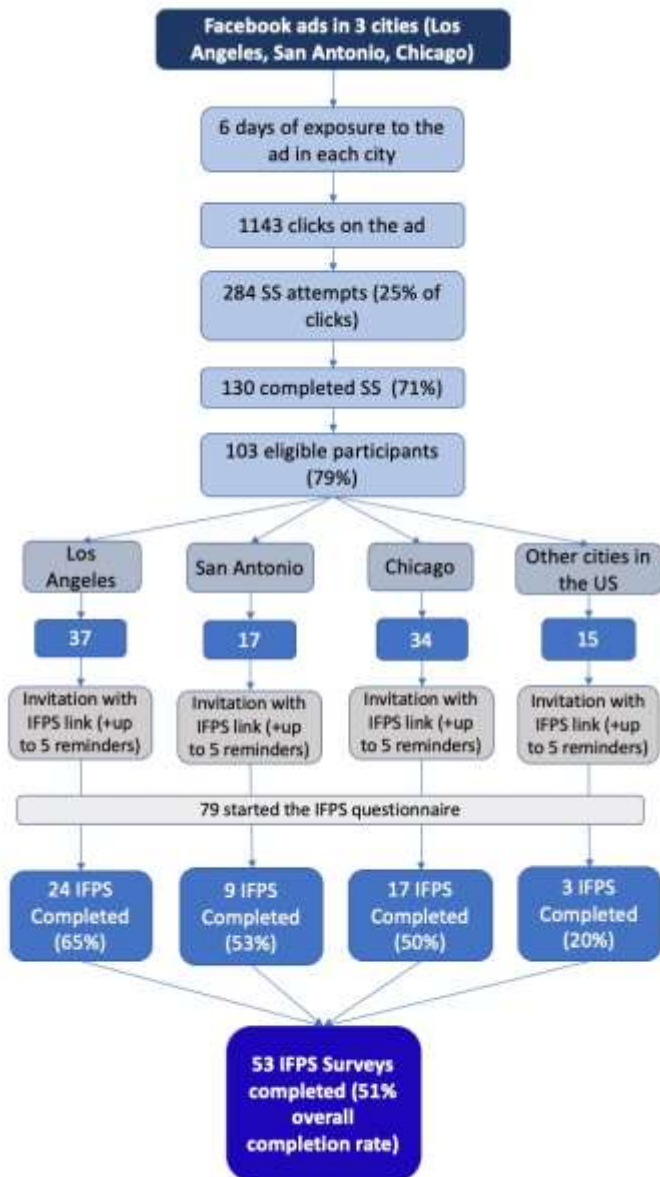
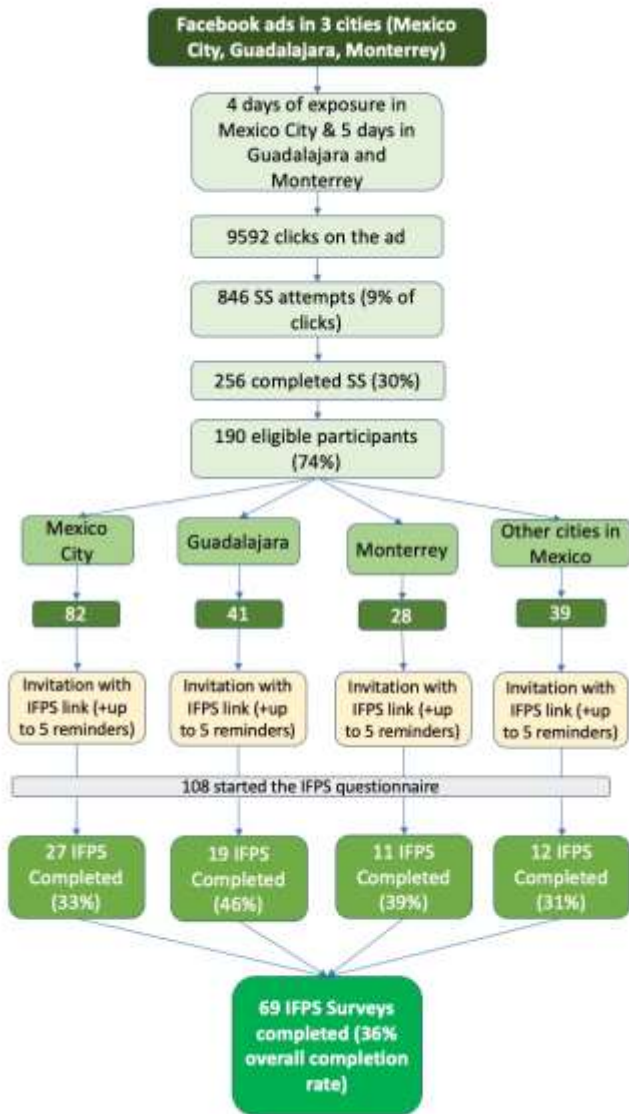


Figure 2. Flow chart of recruitment in Mexico



PARTICIPATION RATES

Across both countries, a total of 10,735 people clicked on the Facebook ad, and 10% of those who clicked on the ad clicked on the link to the SS. Among those who accessed the SS: 3% closed the survey before responding to the age, sex and education questions (i.e., their eligibility was unknown); 3% answered the eligibility items and were found to be eligible but did not provide their contact information (i.e., they did not

complete the SS); 1% completed SS and were found to be ineligible; and 3% completed the SS and were found to be eligible to participate in the study (Table 1).

Table 1. Screening Survey (SS) participation rates, based on number of clicks.

	United States (n=1143)	Mexico (n=9592)	Total (n=10,735)
Accessed SS link	25%	9%	10%
- Unknown eligibility ^a	7%	3%	3%
- Incompleted SS, eligible ^b	6%	2%	3%
- Completed SS, ineligible	3%	1%	1%
- Completed SS, eligible	9%	3%	3%

Study invitations were sent by email to the 293 eligible respondents who completed the SS. The first invitations were sent on average after 2 days of SS completion. Across countries, 44.5% of those invited completed the IFPS questionnaire, 20% partially answered the questionnaire but did not complete it, and 33% did not open the link to the questionnaire (Table 2). The completion rate (completed/invited) was higher in Mexico (51%) than the US (36%).

Table 2. IFPS questionnaire completion rates, based on number of invitations sent.

Completion status	United States (n=103)	Mexico (n=190)	Total (n=293)
Did not open the invitation link	24%	43%	33%
Partial completion of the questionnaire	25%	21%	23%
Completed questionnaire	51%	36%	44.5%

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 3 describes the characteristics of the eligible sample (n=293) and the final sample (n=122). The eligible sample refers to respondents who were eligible to participate based on age, ethnicity, language (Spanish) and education level. The final sample refers to participants who completed the IFPS questionnaire. The majority of participants in the final sample were female (76%), and the average age was 47.9 years old.

Approximately one third of the final sample had less than a high-school education (34%), while 37% had completed high school and 29% had completed technical studies.

Table 3. Eligible and final sample characteristics of participants by country

Characteristics	Eligible sample			Final Sample		
	United States (n=103)	Mexico (n=190)	Total (n=293)	United States (n=53)	Mexico (n=69)	Total (n=122)
Sex						
- Male	28%	31%	24%	21%	26%	24%
- Female	72%	69%	76%	79%	74%	76%
Age (mean)	47.1	48.7	47.9	47.1	48.7	47.9
Education						
- Middle school or less	31%	36%	34%	25%	25%	24%
- High school incomplete	21%	0	8%	23%	0	10%
- High school complete	23%	37%	33%	25%	46%	37%
- Technical studies ^a	24%	26%	45%	27%	29%	29%

a. In Mexico, technical studies refers to technical or vocational studies completed after 9th or 12th grade. In the U.S., technical studies typically occur after completing 12th grade.

COST

Tables 4 and 5 describe the timetables for recruitment on Facebook in the United States and Mexico. All recruitment occurred between April 2020 and May 2020. The tables also show when invitations were sent to participants. In the United States, the Facebook ad was promoted for 8 days in Los Angeles, San Antonio and Chicago, with the first wave of invitations starting on April 28th and the last reminders sent on May 29th. In Mexico, the ad used for 4 days in Mexico City and 5 days in Guadalajara and Monterrey, with the first wave of invitations started on May 9th and the last reminders sent on May 29th.

Table 4. Timetable of recruitment in the United States

	Los Angeles	San Antonio	Chicago
Ads in Facebook			
- 1 st wave ^a	April 16-19 (3 days)	April 22-25 (3 days)	
- 2 nd wave	April 30-June 2 (3 days)		
- 3 rd wave	May 11-13 (2 days)		
Invitations to eligible participants			
- 1 st wave ^{a,b}	April 28	May 5	
- 2 nd wave ^{a,c}	May 8		
- 3 rd wave ^{a,d}	May 19		

- a. Invitations were followed by reminders every two days. Each participant received to up to 5 reminders.
b. The final reminder for the first wave was on May 8th (Los Angeles) and May 15th (San Antonio and Chicago)
c. The final reminder for the second wave was on May 18th.
d. The final reminder for the third wave was on May 29th.

Table 5. Timetable or recruitment in Mexico

	Mexico City	Guadalajara	Monterrey
Ads in Facebook			
- 1 st wave	April 29- May 1 (3 days)	May 6-8 (3 days)	
- 2 nd wave	May 9 (1 day)	May 13-14 (2 days)	
Invitations to eligible participants			
- 1 st wave ^{a,b}	May 9	May 12	
- 2 nd wave ^{a,c}	May 15	May 19	

- a. Invitations were followed by reminders every two days. Each participant received to up to 5 reminders.
b. The final reminders for the first wave were on May 19th (Mexico City) and May 22nd (Guadalajara and Monterrey).
c. The final reminders for the second wave were on May 25th (Mexico City) and May 29th (Guadalajara and Monterrey).

Table 6 describes the costs of the Facebook advertisement and recruitment by country and by wave of advertisement. The table also shows the incentive costs, the combined costs of recruitment (advertisements plus incentives), and, based on these numbers, the average costs for obtaining a single completed questionnaire. The combined for Facebook advertisements in the United States and Mexico was \$931.71 USD. The total cost of advertisements plus incentives for both countries was \$2,682.92 USD. Finally, on average, the cost of obtaining a completed survey was \$21.99 USD.

Table 6. Cost of Facebook-based recruitment in the United States and Mexico

Costs	United States	Mexico	Total
1st wave of Facebook ads^a	\$221.69	\$253.20	\$473.90
2nd wave of Facebook ads^b	\$103.67	\$180.81	\$284.48
3rd wave of Facebook ads^c	\$173.55	-	\$173.55
Total cost for Facebook ads	\$498.91	\$434.01	\$931.71
Total cost of incentives (\$20 USD for the US; ≈\$10 USD for Mexico)	\$1,060.00	\$690.00	\$1,750.00
Total cost (ads + incentives)	\$1,558.91	\$1,124.01	\$2,682.92
Cost per completed survey^d	\$29.41	\$16.29	\$ 21.99

- a. United States=3 days in Los Angeles, San Antonio and Chicago; Mexico=3 days in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey.
b. United States=3 days in San Antonio and Chicago. Mexico = 1 days in Mexico City, 2 days in Guadalajara and Monterrey.
c. United States=2 days in Los Angeles, San Antonio and Chicago.
d. The estimates of cost were calculated dividing the total amount of spent on the advertisement and the total of completed interviews.

REFERENCES

1. Pew Research Center. Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/hispanic-population-in-select-u-s-metropolitan-areas/>
2. INEGI. Población. Available at: <https://www.inegi.org.mx/temas/estructura/>

APPENDIX 1.

Facebook ad United States



Facebook ad interface showing a sponsored post. The ad content includes:

Estudio de Políticas Alimentarias
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La Universidad de Carolina del Sur busca adultos México-Americanos viviendo en Estados Unidos para el "Estudio Internacional de Políticas alimentarias". Participa contestando una encuesta de 45 minutos y recibe una tarjeta de regalo de \$20 USD. Da click en el siguiente enlace para saber si eres elegible para participar: <https://redcap.healthsciencessc.org/surveys/?s=ADY4JF33FT>
Más información en politicasalimentarias.udcsur@gmail.com

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REDCAP.HEALTHSCIENCESSC.ORG
Screening Survey
Investigadores de la Universidad de Carolin... [Learn More](#)

English translation: “The University of South Carolina is looking for Mexican American adults living in the United States for the ‘International Food Policy Study’. Participate by answering a 45-minute survey and receive a \$20 USD gift card. Click to know if you are eligible to Participate (link). More information at politicasalimentarias.udcsur@gmail.com.” (All ads were in Spanish)

Facebook ad Mexico

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La Universidad de Carolina del Sur busca adultos para el "Estudio Internacional de Políticas Alimentarias". Participa contestando una encuesta de 45 minutos y recibe \$200 pesos de crédito en tu teléfono celular. Da click en el siguiente enlace para saber si eres elegible para participar <https://redcap.healthsciencessc.org/surveys/?s=RPFNNR3PJE>.
Más información en politicasalimentarias.udcsur@gmail.com



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Text of the image: "Nutrition Policy Study"